

HB 2381 - S COMM AMD

By Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation

ADOPTED 03/02/2006

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that beavers have
4 historically played a significant role in maintaining the health of
5 watersheds in the Pacific Northwest and act as key agents in riparian
6 ecology. The live trapping and relocating of beavers has long been
7 recognized as a beneficial wildlife management practice, and has been
8 successfully utilized to restore and maintain stream ecosystems for
9 over fifty years. The benefits of active beaver populations include
10 reduced stream sedimentation, stream temperature moderation, higher
11 dissolved oxygen levels, overall improved water quality, increased
12 natural water storage capabilities within watersheds, and reduced
13 stream velocities. These benefits improve and create habitat for many
14 other species, including endangered salmon, river otters, sandhill
15 cranes, trumpeter swans, and other riparian and aquatic species.
16 Relocating beavers into their historic habitat provides a natural
17 mechanism for improving the environmental conditions in Washington's
18 riparian ecosystems without having to resort to governmental regulation
19 or expensive publically funded engineering projects.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.32 RCW
21 to read as follows:

22 (1) The department shall offer a beaver relocation permit that
23 allows the holder or the holder's agent to capture live beavers in the
24 areas of the state where elevated beaver populations are considered a
25 nuisance, transport the beavers, and release the live beavers on
26 property owned or managed by the permit holder. Priority of issuing
27 permits must be based on properties in which beaver populations are
28 considered a nuisance.

1 (2) The department may limit the availability of beaver relocation
2 permits to areas of the state where:

3 (a) There is a low probability of released beavers becoming a
4 nuisance;

5 (b) Conditions exist for released beavers to improve, maintain, or
6 manage stream or riparian ecosystem functions; and

7 (c) There is evidence of historic endemic beaver populations.

8 (3) The department may condition beaver relocation permits to
9 maximize the relocation's success and minimize risk. Factors that the
10 department may condition include:

11 (a) Stream gradient;

12 (b) Sufficiency of the water supply;

13 (c) Stream geomorphology;

14 (d) Adequacy of a food source;

15 (e) Proper site elevation and valley width;

16 (f) Age of the beavers relocated;

17 (g) Times of year for capture and relocation;

18 (h) Requirements for the capture, handling, and transport of the
19 live beavers;

20 (i) Minimum and maximum numbers of beavers that can be relocated in
21 one area; and

22 (j) Requirements for the permit holder to initially provide
23 supplemental food and lodge building materials.

24 (4) The department shall provide beaver relocation permits at no
25 charge to the applicant.

26 (5) The holder of a beaver relocation permit must either obtain a
27 trapping license under RCW 77.65.450 or employ a trapper licensed under
28 RCW 77.65.450 to capture and transport the beavers that are to be
29 relocated.

30 (6) Nothing in this section creates any liability against the state
31 or the beaver relocation permit holder nor authorizes any private right
32 of action for any damages subsequently caused by beavers released
33 pursuant to a beaver relocation permit.

34 (7) For the purposes of this section only, beaver may be relocated
35 from west of the crest of the Cascade mountains to areas east of the
36 crest of the Cascade mountains, but may not be relocated to any area
37 west of the crest of the Cascade mountains.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 77.36 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 Whenever the department undertakes the trapping of nuisance or
4 problem-causing beavers, the department must, if the option is
5 available, capture the beavers with a live trap and work with the
6 holders of beaver relocation permits issued under section 2 of this act
7 to relocate the beavers onto properties that have requested their
8 placement."

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9 On page 1, line 2 of the title, after "species;" strike the
10 remainder of the title and insert "adding a new section to chapter
11 77.32 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 77.36 RCW; and creating a
12 new section."

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